



School District of Indian River County

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Mark J. Rendell, Ed.D. - Superintendent

February 23, 2018

Hello Everyone,

The last seven days have been very emotional. I want to commend the many students and members of our school community who have responded by showing leadership, compassion, and grace. Many of our schools have had students write letters and notes of encouragement to their peers at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. The letters will be given to the students at Douglas when they return to class next week. We have also seen students initiate activities to honor the lives lost at Douglas. For the next 17 days, 17 desks will sit empty in the courtyard at Vero Beach High School in an effort by the students to memorialize those 17 members of the Broward Public Schools family that lost their lives. I want to thank all of our students for thinking of others and acting in such a positive manner.

The safety of our students is always a high priority in our District. We take seriously our responsibility to ensure the safety of your child every day. That having been said, the tragedy at Stoneman Douglas High has also given us the opportunity to review our safety and security protocols to make sure that we are doing everything we can to ensure our schools are as safe as possible.

I wanted to take this opportunity to highlight some of the steps we have taken over the past week:

- In partnership with the Indian River County Sheriff's Office, there has been and will continue to be an increased level of law enforcement visibility, in addition to the Indian River County Sheriff's Office safety plan that is in place throughout the school year.
- Safety plans at each school have been evaluated and improvements have been made where needed. Records of safety drills, evaluation of visitor check-in procedures, and staff interviews have been conducted about safety concerns at schools and district sites.
- Safety Walks have been conducted at every school to review perimeter security measures and identify any potential weak areas. We will be adjusting our capital improvements plan to find ways to fast track any physical improvements to campus security necessary to harden the infrastructure of our schools.
- We have completed a full inventory and systems check of school and facility cameras, software, procedures, and conducted repairs, as needed.
- Principals have conducted systems checks on their schools' internal communication systems to ensure their ability to reach staff and students quickly and successfully.

"Educate and inspire every student to be successful"

Shawn R. Frost • Dale Simchick • Laura Zorc • Charles G. Searcy • Tiffany M. Justice
District 1 District 2 District 3 District 4 District 5

"To serve all students with excellence"
Equal Opportunity Educator and Employer

In addition to these measures, on February 22, our Principals received training on updated Active Shooter Response protocols. The Indian River County Sheriff's Office conducted the training and we are very thankful for their support. Coincidentally, this training had been a scheduled part of our Leadership meeting this month. The training affirmed our current procedures but also gave us information on how to enhance our response capabilities. Principals, district staff, and law enforcement personnel will be working together to incorporate these improvements into drills we will have in the coming weeks.

Keeping Indian River County Schools safe requires all of us working together. Unfortunately, over the last several days we have experienced an increase in threatening statements or comments attributed to students, usually posted on social media. All threats, verbal, written, and electronic (for example, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter), are immediately reported to law enforcement. To aid in our ability to respond to these possible threats, the Sheriff has set up a tip line. Anyone with information about a possible threat can call (772)978-6116, or send a message to tips@ircsheriff.org

Parents, we ask that you please monitor student communications and social media accounts. These threats not only disrupt the learning environment; they create a sense of fear and anxiety in an already fragile climate.

Finally, I want to thank everyone in our community who has been so positive and supportive as we have worked our way through this. Many of our students have risen to the occasion and have shown us how to respond with empathy and kindness. Again, we will continue to do everything we can to ensure our schools are safe and secure.

Sincerely,



Mark J. Rendell, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Indian River County Sheriff Tip Line

(772) 978-6116

tips@ircsheriff.org